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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

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INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Roads and Transportation in Northwest Sinkiang

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The Urumchi (87-35, 43-48) - Suilai (86-19, 44-21) road is an earth-banked, stone-surfaced road for 90 per-cent of its length. Its width, in most places, is sufficient for two trucks to pass, and convoys can pass each other at 30 miles per hour without slowing down. By December 1950, all culverts and bridges had been newly constructed or strengthened to carry 15-ton loads. No part of this road is asphalted, but its condition is such that cars and jeeps can average 50 miles per hour, and convoys 20 to 25 miles per hour. In the Hut'upi (86-57, 44-07) - Lotui¹ stretch, wet weather causes skidding, and heavy trucks sometimes bog down. In mid-winter, however, when the surface is snow-packed, travelling conditions are excellent and, part from trouble in starting on cold mornings, few difficulties impede heavy traffic.
2. The Urumchi - Turfan (89-05, 42-56) road, apart from the crossing of the Tien Shan at Tapanch'eng (88-30, 43-20), is a natural road. It is similar in construction to the Urumchi - Suilai road except in the Turfan area where, as a result of heavy traffic and arid desert conditions, it is badly rutted and corrugated. About 90 kilometers south of Urumchi the winter snow is not heavy enough to delay traffic, but high winds may be encountered, freezing radiators and endangering human life.
3. About one or two kilometers from the Urumchi suburb of Hsitach'iao on the road to Manchu City there is a group of maintenance depots; another group is beyond the first kilometer south of Urumchi on the Trufan road.
4. The Urumchi suburban area of Hsitach'iao is also the site of large scale warehouse construction. These warehouses are about 350 feet in length, 20 feet in width, and 18 feet in height. Very few of these warehouses were completed before 1950, but it was intended to continue the building after the spring thaws in 1951. The actual number of the completed buildings is not known, but they cover a vast area. These buildings were erected under military supervision by skilled laborers paid at normal rates and by unskilled labor supplied from army and student sources. Mobile workshops, fitted with lathes and shapers were also seen in the vicinity. Some of these warehouses contained wool, hides, and cotton; others contained large crates of unknown content brought from Khorgos marked with Russian letters.

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5. In 1950, convoy traffic in the Urumchi area varied in density. Russian convoys, made up of 70 to 100 Zis and Armo trucks moved eastward to China on an average of one large convoy per night. Chinese convoys made up of 30 to 40 G.M.C. and Dodge trucks in poor condition, averaged four per week. The point of origin of both convoys was Khorgos.
6. Russian convoys moving west out of China passed through Urumchi under cover of the night or in the early hours of the morning. Many of the trucks carried large drums of gasoline from Chiuch'uan (98-33, 39-46), the amount of gasoline carried by each five-ton truck probably being somewhat less than 1,300 gallons. Chinese trucks, however, also moving west out of China, employed no formal convoy system but moved during the day in groups of five to eight without a fixed schedule. The Chinese trucks carried mostly gasoline, Chinese consumer goods, and personnel wearing the uniform of the Chinese Communist army.²
7. Convoys operated eastward from Urumchi as far as Chiuch'uan. Most ambushes took place between Ch'ichiaoching (91-34, 43-30) and Hami (93-27, 42-48).

1. Comment. This place could not be identified.

2. Comment. See paragraph 11, for additional details concerning Soviet use of the main road through Urumchi as one of their main supply lines into Northwest China.

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